



To: Finance Committee

From: Jennifer McTiernan H., Executive Director, CitySeed

Re: H. B. No. 6350 (RAISED) AN ACT ELIMINATING EXEMPTIONS FROM THE SALES AND USE TAX AND LOWERING THE RATE OF SUCH TAX.

Date: February 8, 2009

I am submitting this written testimony to strongly, strongly urge the Finance Committee to defeat any bill that proposes to eliminate the farmer sales tax and fuel tax exemptions, including H.B. 6350. These two tax exemptions are critical to the ability of farmers in Connecticut to continue to operate their farms. Eliminating these exemptions would have a disastrous affect on Connecticut farms, at a time when our communities need them most.

CitySeed is a non-profit organization that operates a network of farmers' markets in the City of New Haven and seeks to promote increased access to local, healthy food and farm viability. During the 2008 market season, City Farmers' Markets redeemed over \$78,500 in WIC and Food Stamps from New Haven residents who are most nutritionally at-risk. In addition, these four, outdoor markets contributed over \$1.75 million to the local economy. Eliminating the farmer sales tax and fuel tax exemptions would jeopardize not only the health of low-income residents of cities like New Haven, but also the economic driver that is local agriculture.

It might seem that the fate of farms is not tied to the fate of people who live in cities, but CitySeed's experience operating a network of farmers' markets in New Haven clearly demonstrates otherwise. For this reason, Connecticut's agricultural base is essential to the health of our communities - rural, urban and suburban. In closing, I urge you to defeat H.B. 6350 and any bill that seeks to eliminate the farmer sales tax and fuel exemptions. PLEASE DEFEAT H.B. 6350! Thank you for your time and consideration.